

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Study Area	1
Site-Oriented and Landscape-Oriented Approaches to Conservation Analysis	2
Distinctive Features of the Current Study	6
Progress Toward a Regional Conservation Plan	7
Biogeographic Setting of the Study Area	16
Biological Significance of the Southeast Coastal Plain of North Carolina	16
Abiotic Features	16
Geology and Geomorphology	16
Hydrology	18
Climate and Weather	18
Biological Features	21
Natural Communities	21
Species Diversity and Biogeography	22
Human Influences on the Environment	23
Determination of Site Significance	28
Natural Heritage Elements	28
Element species	28
Community Elements	28
Element Attributes Used for Site Prioritization	29
Element Ranks	30
Occurrence Ranks	30
Site Ranking Procedures	31
TNC Biodiversity Significance Ranks	31
NC NHP Significance Ranks	32
Regional Element Analysis	33
Setting Element Conservation Goals	34
Selecting the Set of Sites to Meet the Conservation Goals	34
Results of Element Analysis and Site Significance Ranking	36
Elements Occurring within the Study Area	36
Significant Sites Occurring within the Study Area	37
Results of Statewide Analysis	37
Results of Regional Element Analysis	38
Analysis of Landscape Integrity	39
Landscape/Habitat Indicator Guilds	39
Landscape/Habitat Groupings	41